## PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

## INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT 2004

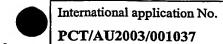
	(PCI Article 36	and Rule 70)	WED DOT	J	
Applicant's or agent's file reference FP18267	FOR FURTHER ACTION	See Notification of Tra Examination Report (I	ansmittal of International Pre	iminary	
International Application No.	International Filing Da (day/month/year)	te Pr	iority Date (day/month/year)		
PCT/AU2003/001037	15 August 2003	. 15	August 2002	•	
International Patent Classification (IPC) or	national classification ar	nd IPC			
Int. Cl. 7 C22B 3/06, 3/08, 3/10, 3/20,	, 3/44, 23/00	· ·			
Applicant			•		
WMC RESOURCES LTD et al		·			
			· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.					
2. This REPORT consists of a total of 3	sheets, including this c	over sheet.			
This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).					
These annexes consist of a total of	of sheet(s).				
3. This report contains indications relating	to the following items:				
I X Basis of the report					
II Priority				•	
III Non-establishment of opi	Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability				
IV Lack of unity of invention	Lack of unity of invention				
V X Reasoned statement under citations and explanation	Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement				
VI Certain documents cited	Certain documents cited				
VII Certain defects in the inte	Certain defects in the international application				
VIII Certain observations on t	Certain observations on the international application				
Date of submission of the demand  Date of completion of the report					
18 February 2004	Date of completion of the report  1 March 2004				

Date of submission of the demand 18 February 2004	Date of completion of the report  1 March 2004
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/AU	Authorized Officer
AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929	Jonathan Lewis
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## INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No
PCT/ATJ2003/001037

I.	Basis of the report					
1.	With regard to the elements of the international application:*					
	the international application as originally filed.					
	the description, pages, as originally filed,					
!	pages, filed with the demand,					
	pages, received on with the letter of					
	the claims, pages, as originally filed,					
	pages , as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19,					
	pages, filed with the demand,					
	pages, received on with the letter of					
	the drawings, pages, as originally filed,					
	pages, filed with the demand,					
	pages, received on with the letter of					
	the sequence listing part of the description:					
!	pages, as originally filed *					
	pages , filed with the demand					
	pages, , received on with the letter of					
2.	With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in					
	which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.  These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language which is:					
	the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).					
	the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).					
	the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2					
	and/or 55.3).					
3.	With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the international					
	preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:					
•	contained in the international application in written form.					
	filed together with the international application in computer readable form.					
	furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.					
,	furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.					
	The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.					
,	The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished					
4.	The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:					
	the description, pages					
	the claims, Nos.					
•	the drawings, sheets/fig.					
5.	This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).**					
*						
**	Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report					



<b>V.</b>	Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial a	pplicability; c	itations
	and explanations supporting such statement		•

1.	Statement				
	Novelty (N)	Claims	1-23		YES
		Claims			NO
	Inventive step (IS)	Claims	1-23		YES
	•	Claims		· •	NO
	Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims	1-23	. •	YES
		Claims	•		NO

2. Citations and explanations (Rule 70.7)

D1: US 6391089

D2: WO 1997/008349

D3: CA 2408356

D4: US 5783057

1. Independent Claim 1 discloses a process for recovering valuable metals from laterite ores in which ferric ions in a leach liquor containing a valuable metal are reduced to ferrous ions using a suitable reductant. None of documents D1-D4 disclose the step of reducing ferric ions to ferrous ions in a leach liquor. As a result, Claim 1 is novel.

Dependent Claims 2-23 are also novel.

The invention disclosed in Claims 1-23 involves an inventive step over those disclosed in the prior art.

2. The Claims are directed towards a process for recovering valuable metals from laterite ores and therefore have industrial applicability.